

Descendants of Daisy Yitjiyangu

Commonly known as the Dhus and the Dershaws, these two large families are descendants of Daisy Yitjiyangu and a white station worker named James Swan. Their Aboriginal step-father was a Nyamal man named Djimbangu. The descendants of Daisy do not identify as members of Martuidja Banyjima. They may refer to themselves as 'Fortescue Banyjima' through their historical connection to Mulga Downs, but appear to have only a historical connection and do not participate in Wardilba law with Fortescue Banyjima people.

Daisy's daughter Ivy Swan had eleven children and her daughter Susie Swan had thirteen children. However, unlike the Martuidja families, the descendants have married outside the pattern of relationships shown in Plate 1, generally not participated in ceremonies and appear to have no historical filial connection with Martuidja people. The archival evidence also suggests that Daisy's children Ivy and Susie did not identify to the same group as other Aboriginal residents on Mulga Downs station.

While living on Mulga Downs between the first and second World Wars, Ivy and Susie were kept apart from other Aboriginal workers. A 'List of half castes' notes: 'Ivy - Female, age about 17, white father, single uneducated, is employed in manager's house and sleeps and lives at the house, neither is she allowed to go to the native camp without permission.'¹ A trial marriage to a man named Kip was unsuccessful. A report notes, 'this is the only occasion that Ivy associated with Aborigines':²

Ivy told me she could not possibly live with Kip, she put up a good trial, he Kip was too dirty, Kip did not like her. I suggested she on the other hand, was too clean, too fussy for an aboriginal husband. Kip left her he was not driven away. Ivy then appealed to Derchow to protect her, when Ivy became pregnant, Derchow appealed to the CPA for permission to marry her.

Frank Derschow was of German origin and proved to be a good father to Ivy's children, all of whom bore his name. However at one stage Derschow attempted to have Kip's son removed from the family and placed in an Aboriginal institution.³

¹ AN 1/7 Acc File 459/1939. List of half castes in Tableland Police Sub-district. Mulga Downs (Hancock and Wittenoorn)

² Letters from Inspector Ernest Mitchell to Protector of Aborigines, 1928.

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Susie Swan was also claimed by a supportive non-Aboriginal man named Edward Dhu, who supported her and their thirteen children. Again the Dhus 'married out' as reflected by their family tree with no known historical filial connection to Bottom End Banyjima and few cultural commonalities with them. Considering that the descendants of Daisy appear to have spent their early years on Mulga Downs station, it is unusual that there are no known connections to other families living on the station, apart from the trail marriage to Kip. I do not consider the descendants of Daisy to be members of the Martuidja native title claimant group or to share Martuidja Banyjima laws and customs.